REMARKS

The Official Action mailed June 28, 2005, has been received and its contents carefully noted. This response is filed within three months of the mailing date of the Official Action and therefore is believed to be timely without extension of time. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that this response is being timely filed.

The Applicants note with appreciation the consideration of the Information Disclosure Statements filed on July 15, 2003, and October 14, 2003. A further Information Disclosure Statement is submitted herewith and consideration of this Information Disclosure Statement is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-27 are pending in the present application, of which claims 1-4 are independent. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8, 17, 20, 25 and 27 have been amended to better recite the features of the present invention. Claims 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23 and 26 have been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner (page 2, Paper No. 20050622). Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16-18, 20-22, 24, 25 and 27 are currently elected, of which claims 1, 2 and 4 are independent. For the reasons set forth in detail below, all claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Paragraph 5 of the Official Action objects to claim 4 for a lack of proper antecedent basis for "the substrate" (page 3, Id.) and to claims 17, 20, 25 and 27 asserting that the claims are not in proper Markush format (Id.). In response, claim 4 has been amended to recite "a substrate" as appropriate. Although original claims 17, 20, 25 and 27 were not intended to be in Markush format (the use of "or" is proper and does not invoke the Markush format rules), the Applicants have amended claims 17, 20, 25 and 27 into Markush format. The amendments are merely clarifying in nature, and should not in any way affect the scope of protection afforded the claims for infringement purposes, particularly under the Doctrine of Equivalents. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections are requested.

Paragraph 7 of the Official Action provisionally rejects claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16-18, 20-22 and 24 under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1-12 of copending Application No. 10/740,437. Paragraph 8 of the Official Action provisionally rejects claims 25 and 27 under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over the combination of claims 1-12 of copending Application No. 10/740,437 and U.S. Patent No. 6,127,199 to Inoue et al.

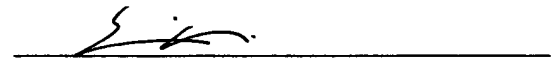
It is noted that the provisional double patenting rejections are the only rejections in the present application. It appears that a § 112 rejection and a provisional double patenting rejection remain in the '437 application, which is a later-filed application. The Examiner is reminded that MPEP § 804, Part I.B (page 800-19 of the August 2001 Revision), provides the following guidance regarding the handling of applications where provisional double patenting rejections are the only rejections that remain:

> If the "provisional" double patenting rejections in both applications are the only rejections remaining in those applications, the examiner should then withdraw that rejection in one of the applications (e.g., the application with the earlier filing date) and permit the application to issue as a patent. The examiner should maintain the double patenting rejection in the other application as a "provisional" double patenting rejection which will be converted into a double patenting rejection when the one application issues as a patent.

The Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner review the guidance at MPEP § 804 and take appropriate actions in the present application and in the '437 application. Specifically, it appears that the present application should be permitted to issue as a patent.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric J. Robinson
Reg. No. 38,285

Robinson Intellectual Property Law Office, P.C.
PMB 955
21010 Southbank Street
Potomac Falls, Virginia 20165
(571) 434-6789